



2016-2017 Solid Waste Project Brainstorm

Where do “things” end up when we throw them away?

There is no AWAY.

We burn them, we bury them; we discard them for others to deal with the pollution of the land, the air, our groundwater and waterways.

What if we had more solutions to reduce waste? Ideas that could grow, expand or be replicated? Ideas that lead to behavior change that will result in a lifetime of different choices for everyone involved? This is the only way we will make change.

Its up to you. We want YOU to tackle this problem and reduce waste in whatever way you can think of either in your school, neighborhood, town, business district, congregation, team, wherever!

We want to encourage you by holding a contest, the Greenlight Award. We will grant up to \$1,000 to the best ideas and give the contest winner \$500. Funded projects will receive media attention, will look great on your resume, and will have an impact to make our community more sustainable.

Here are some ideas we brainstormed. You are welcome to use any ideas here (or others) and we encourage a combination of ideas for optimal results!

REFUSE / REDUCE– don’t buy it in the first place, buy less materials made new from non-recycled, non-compostable, or toxic materials

- **Pledge** not to buy new for certain % of purchases.



- **Alternative gift idea campaign** – ask people to pledge that 50% of their gift giving this year will be non-stuff – start an alternative gift registry or list of alternative gift ideas.
- **Alt gift wrap** (reusable fabric and ribbon) (with info about how people can save and reuse).
- **Hold a zero waste challenge** with a pilot group. Interview them to determine the biggest obstacles to this lifestyle in our area and make recommendations to change.
- **Responsible Purchasing:** Purchase materials that contain recycled materials or are recyclable or compostable. Avoid plastics and toxics in materials. Purchase less.
- Buy THIS , not THAT – app; website; brochure? Materials that use recycled materials rather than raw materials, materials that are less toxic, that are recyclable.
- Green back to school supplies; Schools supplies re-sale...
<http://greenschools.net/article.php?id=177>
- Plastic Free Schools <http://greenschools.net/article.php?id=446>
- Paper calculator <http://c.environmentalpaper.org/home> to determine what other paper purchasing and use choices an organization/school/business could choose.
- Green purchasing guides
http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/all/index.php
- **Evaluate Packaging** – what is best, what is worst, what not to buy,
- **How can students survive on unpackaged food?** What does lunch look like every day? Educate about eating fresh, locally, and non-packaged food... Meal plan? Shopping list? Sell lunch one day and use money...
- **Double sided printing** policy
- **Refuse to buy plastic bottles – carry your own;**
- **Plastic bag ban;** <http://www.ted.com> Artist Dianna Cohen shares some tough truths about plastic pollution in the ocean and in our lives -- and some thoughts on how to free ourselves from the plastic gyre.
- **Buy this not that** guide to purchasing non-toxic, non-over packaged, better stuff.
- **End Junk Mail.** Encourage and help people to stop getting junk mail – how to stop it from coming. Help people do it. Also, encourage sign up for paperless billing, etc.



- **Microbead** awareness to get people to stop the bead
- **Trash tracker** – consumption tracker app (there isn't one yet)
- **Study cafeteria practices** to optimize recycling, energy savings, and expense.
- **Calculator** – if I buy this, what is the impact?

REUSE. REPURPOSE, REPAIR, AND SHARE - find ways to repurpose items that otherwise would end up in waste or recycling.

- Start a business to repurpose items, Hold a contest
- Toy library <https://mplstoylibrary.org>
- Start a Freecycle group for Northern Westchester and promote throughout the area <https://www.freecycle.org>
- Tool Library <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-start-a-tool-library>
- Swap Shack – or partner with Katonah thrift store or other to collect items... books, games, clothing, costumes, prom dresses,
- Renovating kitchen/bathroom what do you do what that stuff
- Hold a Garage Sale
- DIY projects – hold a workshop for DIY upcycling, trash to treasure projects or create upcycled crafts and sell them while educating people about upcycling

Clothing

- Team uniform recycling – don't put names on them.
- thrift store fashion show
- Do a shopping guide / website for Northern Westchester with all thrift, consignment, and other stores.

Use items to make other items (art, aluminum can solar panel, plastic bottle greenhouse)

Hazardous waste reduction

- Paint purchasing guide [http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/news/news_detail.php?config\[r311\]\[instance_uid\]=14](http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/news/news_detail.php?config[r311][instance_uid]=14) Create Paint calculator app for local hardware stores and put out information about responsible purchasing. Paint share (community shed).
- Nontoxic cleaners – Green school cleaners; household cleaners; create homemade cleaners; hold workshop as to how to mix your own.



Zero Waste Events

- Who would pass a zero waste policy for events? Create sample resolution to present to groups.
- What knowledge/materials do they need to implement it? Hold workshop, make website, create film, etc.
- Hold a zero waste event to educate and raise money to do the above

ROT – compost organic material

Sci ideas <http://compost.css.cornell.edu/ResearchIdeas.html> Present your findings to the community – newspaper, talk, social media

Composting – what combination of materials is optimal for composting? Guide to optimal composting

- Way to break down compost faster?
- Start a composting pilot in a building, at an organization, in a neighborhood
- Hold a composting workshop
- Build a great compost bin or teach others to build their own
- Which coffee cups break down faster? What is best for the compost pile?
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- Hold a composting workshop.
- Start a composting pick up business
- Get your school to start composting
- Get your church, synagogue, local business, restaurant – to start.
- Build simple container to sell to families to make at home recycling (or composting) easier.
- Leaves/lawnmowers – town compost

Food Waste

- Collect extra food and donate it before it gets thrown out. Establish program to gather excess produce from gardens and donate to feed people.

RECYCLE – make sure items that can be recycled end up in the recycling and not the waste stream; make recycling easier



- Terra Cycle <http://www.terracycle.com/en-US/>
- Spin Green <http://www.spingreen.com> Textile donation
- Education and Awareness to increase recycling
- Clothing donation
- Team uniform recycling/reuse
- Graduation gown recycling/reuse
- Prom gown recycling/reuse
- Freecycle or Take it or Leave it Shed
- Invent an audio stick on button to go on your waste drawer in kitchen that says “is it recyclable?” – sell them.
- There is no “away” (in Throw Away). Where is Away?
- Household Material Recovery – work with the town and the county to hold a Day to collect hazardous wastes like automotive fluids, kerosene, mercury thermometers, electronic waste, fluorescent light bulbs,.. fees charged, have to make a reservation, drive to Valhalla
- What do to with batteries?
- Waste and recycling day - <https://americarecyclesday.org/toolkit/>
- Used cell phones
- Field trip to MRF – schools program
- Get a grant for decent waste/recycling bins. Design contest for bins.
- Teach people about Single Stream recycling – do a play, table regularly, make a film, create a public art project
- Show a film and have a panel discussion, follow up with attendees to see if change behavior
- Study in behavior change – what gets people to recycle more. Give them different kinds of information and then test if they increase recycling as a result. Ask some to track behavior and others just to measure at the end of the week. Some have a friend call... HOOK.
- http://recyclemaniacs.org/sites/default/files/Strategy%20Guide_for%20web.pdf
- guide to using behavior change strategies to motivate students to waste less and recycle more. – Do your own study of what is most effective.

Investigative reporting: Where does our recycling go, what actually gets recycled, what is the cost, what is the most important thing to recycle and what is a waste of time?



Start a business that reduces, reuses or recycles and educate people why your product is important

Measuring Results

Responsible purchasing calculators: Use these cost and benefit calculators to quantify the results of responsible purchasing.

http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/all/calculator/

The EPA has a Waste reduction model <https://www.epa.gov/warm> WARM calculates and totals GHG emissions of baseline and alternative waste management practices—source reduction, recycling, combustion, composting, anaerobic digestion and landfilling.

General

Use an ecological footprint calculator to have people determine their footprint and then have them address something to reduce it. For example:

<http://ecocamp.us/eco-footprint-calculator>

Zero waste pilot with test group. Keep waste in mason jar like Lauren Siegel. Test different information to different groups to see what works to motivate. Take survey of biggest obstacles for these people. Where are the challenges for typical student in your school/ in their homes? In their community? What was hard about it and what made it easy?

Generic

- Program/Pilot – try to implement a program on a small scale to prove that it can work. Make a “toolkit “for others to follow.
- **Education – teach, hold a workshop, hold a panel discussion after showing a film**
- **Make a game**
- **Hold a contest**
- **Hold an event**
- **Make a spectacle**
- **Write a play**



- Get students to take the Zero Waste challenge for a week and give feedback. Teach them how to do it,
- **Policy – get a rule passed, a policy changed – in school, at a house of worship, throughout a business district, in an organization**
- **Research – write a report of your findings with recommendations about how to do something better and present it to decision-makers who can implement change. Use the findings to do a pilot or test your theory.**
- **Awareness – bring attention to something to inspire action. How? Art, theatre, writing, social media, posters, film, media attention,**
- **Partnerships and collaboration – get a group to agree to do something because of their association with one another. The Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, the Houses of Worship, the schools...**
- **Create a toolkit for others to follow what you did**
- **Build something to make a point**
- **Create a product to sell**

More resources

<http://www.sustainabilitydegrees.com/the-ultimate-how-to-guide-for-students/> - ultimate guide to sustainability activism for students

Ideas <http://storyofstuff.org/campaigns/>